

Summertime Riding

Mark Welch — Safety Officer



I have a news flash for the HOG Chapter – summer is here! There have been several articles written about riding in cold or inclement weather but not much on hot weather. What a perfect time for some really cool tips!

One thing that you can do to stay cool in hot weather is to stay covered. Along with providing protection from the sun and during a crash, it will help keep you cool when you are riding. When the air temperature is above 93 degrees, it will actually warm the skin if it is exposed. This is known as convection. The heat being absorbed by your body must be cooled by sweating. Wearing protective clothing will reduce the amount of heat your body receives through convection and will reduce the amount of heat your body has to lose through sweating. It will be a challenge, though, in stop and go traffic going through Tallahassee.

Some sportswear similar to what athlete's wear can help tremendously. A long sleeved shirt made out of material that wicks away your sweat works wonders in the dog days of summer. The key to these types of materials is air flow. As long as air is flowing over the material, it will evaporate your sweat and cool you down. You may want to wet down your clothing. If you have ever been caught in a shower while riding, you know all too well the cooling effect when the shower is over and you are riding with wet clothes. As the water evaporates, it takes the heat with it and cools you down.

You can wet down a bandana and wear it around your neck where your blood gets close to the surface of your skin to help keep you cool.

Don't forget to hydrate. Drink plenty of water. Avoid sugary drinks, caffeine, and alcohol. For long rides, you may want to consider a camel pack. Filled with ice water, it will be cool to your back and you can sip on water

throughout the ride. Pay attention to your urine on the pit stops. It should be nice and clear, indicating that you



are well hydrated. The darker the color the more dehydrated you are and you need to get water on board.

Most of all, pay attention to your body. It will tell you what you need to know. What you want to avoid is riding until you are so hot that your body begins to weaken and you lose focus on your riding. Plan your trip to allow plenty of rest stops, take water in and let it out. Wet yourself (with fresh water, Wes) and enjoy your ride!

Head and eyes!

Mark